OHS 24 Finley, Chi. Daily News

Dear Larry, Watergate Update 3/22/72

This is an I-Told-You-So letter, but an I told Larry do nor even, if one were to be fair, an I told Bob, although I did. I could even give you the date because I met him when Lil and I had medical appointments, and where we did. The Post's story this a.m. on discrepancees of $900,000 in the first Republican accounting may have come from a tip and suggestion I gave Woodward months ago or not, may have been fed recently by someone with inside or not. May have come from my conversation with Carl Bernstein last week of not. I don't know and don't expect they'll say. But I suggested this check to them all and one not yet made, for the 1968 returns of certain Repub. committees.

I used those files so extensively when I was a kid and the Clerk of the House of Representatives kept them that they changed the rules to frustrate me! Once I moved in three typists at one, unannounced time, having decided in advance and very quietly what I wanted and needed.

So, I feel badly that this important part of the story broke so late, when I believe indictments may be but minutes away. I read the official statements as keyed to the backgrounding on them already given by Justice which is, after all, part of the administration and the party in power. Had this kind of thing broken earlier, it would have been less easy for the prosecutor to follow his traditional role and dominate the grand jury. It is, I would now presume, fairly certain that the grand jury did not consider the party involvement, was limited to the crime of breaking and entering or something like it, with possibly but not certainly a bugging charge.

Well, after reading this a.m.'s story, which was rather late in the day when I was taking a break, I phoned Bernstein. He was busy so we may talk tomorrow. I asked him if he had made a personal check (as I'd suggested recently) and he said he had. I asked how come he didn't use the tally that summarizes at the beginning. He said you'd never believe it, but their ain't none. Almost direct quote! Ever heard of anything that bald and bold? There is supposed to be the not unusual recap to summarize, then breakdowns, then breakdowns of breakdowns, unless the law had been changed radically. They didn't even do this. And that, to me, says but one thing: desparation.

There are six-figure omissions in income and expenditures. Now, this suggestion, if you are still publishing and interested. One of the heavier sugar suppliers is your insurance magnate Stone. He seems not unwilling to talk about his contributions. I think it is a legitimate question to ask him if he has made any contributions since the new law went in. Inference: you BUM, did you give everything on the assumption that it could not be made public? He might get defensive and deny it and tell you, voluntarily or in answer to questions, when he also gave how much subgequent to the law, I believe the date was April 7. If you get something like this, from him or anyone else out there who is likely, Bob can trot over and check the public records to see if recorded. That part ought to be a snap, unless this part of the record keeping also has been deliberately fouled up. It used to be organized.

Frankly, although the Post hasn't used it, I think there is a good story in the state of the "records" themselves.

Hastily,

Later 8/22 Explanation on Bob, bob-tailed in hurry to finish note without holding supper, for which I had to go to neighbor picking (hum!)corn: He was not on story. Someone else was. And he doesn't give orders. He was interested personally but I guess never found more time. I phoned him once or twice with tips but no callback.

Tonight's CBS TV news reported that not the Post alone but the LA Times had the story of the $500,000 mess. I don't see the LATimes and don't know if you do, but if you do I'd like to see if they have what Post didn't. Despite Art Hunkin's plug in Freep received from friend yesterday and read while looking at news (that's the kind of news), the Post has to date fallen far short of what they could have done.

Freed of CRIC has interesting conjecture in Freep: that ploy was to plant phoney documents. I'd like to be able to figure out the benefit, for they'd have to steal them back to use them and then they'd be crooks, which wouldn't help. If I could figure what they had in mind it might be a better idea than mine, that the manpower was for a heist.

If you haven't seen it, the Freep carried Tackwood's story of 8 months earlier of a secret operation to create disturbances at the San Diego convention to create sympathy for Nixon or excuses for worst. I knew he had given two names but couldn't get them. They are Martin and White. The White alias hasn't been used yet. Don't know if it is in one of Hunt's books, but it is an obvious code name for White House (as in man from). Also rather interesting is the sum he gave for a secret fund for repressive things:$10,000,000, which happens to equal the unaccounted funds collected before the deadline requiring detailed filings. I don't remember seeing it in the papers but Mae Brussell says in 8/72 Realist this was the work of Hunt's p.r. agency. I'm inclined to doubt, unless they handled it in years past.

I've been trying to get in to get court records, that is, filings except for 200 pp from repub. filings, but he hasn't. I can't think of that much xeroxing, and the courts make a nice profit, about 50¢ per page. The Demos must have filed some interesting things to which the reporters didn't tumble, not knowing backrgound. Best, M